

# Trends in Children's Mental Health: Public Health Implications

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# Objective:

To stimulate discussion of the role the public health community can play in addressing the epidemic of pediatric mental illness



# The data make the case:

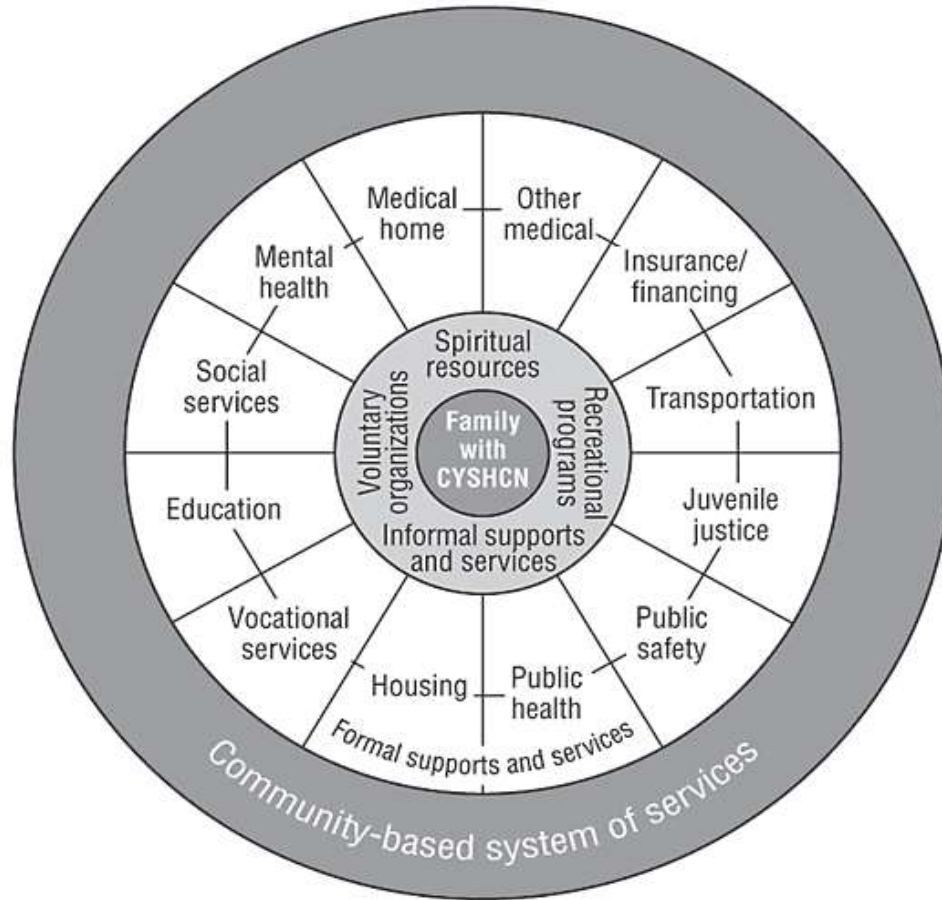
*We are beyond a one-child-at-a-time approach.*

*Mental illness is a public health issue.*

*It takes a village....*



# Family-Centered Community-based System of Services for Children and Youth



# Service gaps

- >20% of children/youth have mental disorder
  - 20%-25% receive treatment
  - 40%-50% terminate services prematurely

Factors: lack of access, transportation, finances, stigma
- Chronically under-funded public mental health (MH) system focuses on individuals with severe impairment
- Little support for prevention or services to children with emerging or mild/moderate conditions

# Workforce issues

- Insufficient #s of child MH specialists, especially, child psychiatrists and providers of services to young children
- Administrative barriers in insurance plans limit access to existing providers
- Many forces leading families to seek help for MH problems in primary care
- Pediatric workforce faces many challenges

# Pediatric primary care challenges



- Lack of comfort, training, evidence, payment...
- Limited MH / SA referral sources
- Unfamiliarity with existing MH / SA resources
- Silo mentality impeding communication, collaboration

# Roles for the public health community....



# Provide the population perspective



- Publicize MH trends
- Identify and address risk factors for childhood mental illness
- Identify and enhance protective factors

# Expand partnerships

- Consumers (e.g., NAMI, Federation of Families)
- Professional associations of MH providers
- Academic pediatricians and psychiatrists
- Area Health Education Center
- Primary care clinicians (peds, fam med, NP, PA)
- Early Intervention system
- State department of ed / local school systems
- Juvenile Justice / DSS
- Medicaid / SCHIP agencies
- Insurers



# Increase collaboration and coordination across “silos”

## Examples:

- Community protocols (e.g., psychiatric emergencies, ADHD)
- MH resource guide
- Mixers

# Foster policies favorable to MH integration in primary care

## Examples:

- Bright Futures implementation
- Incentives for co-locating MH professional in primary care setting
- Payment (especially Medicaid and SCHIP) for all facets of mental health care

# Champion the cause of prevention

## Examples:

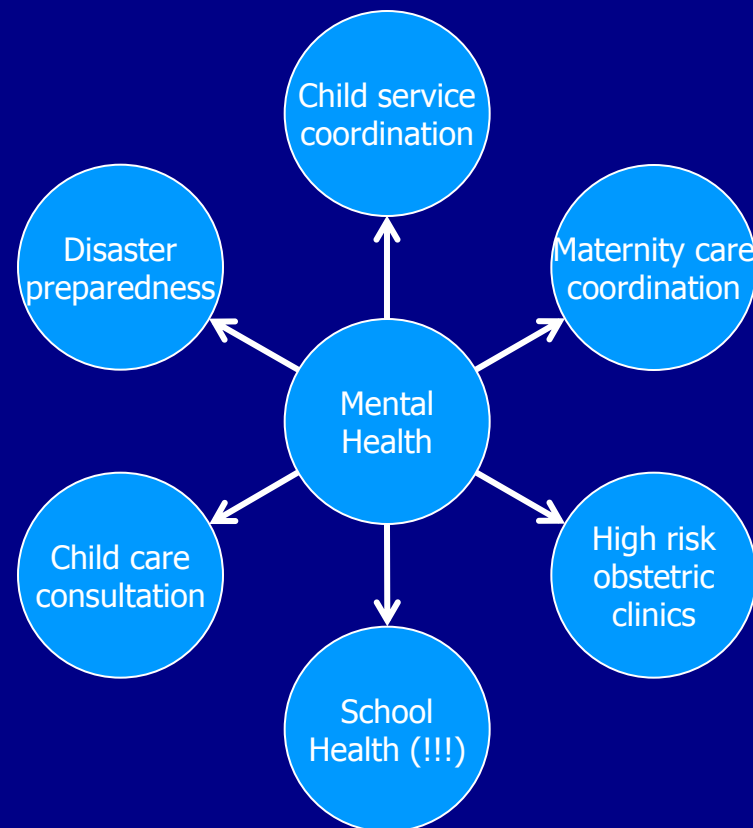
- Bright Futures
- Nurse-family Partnership (Olds model)
- Evidence-based parenting programs
- Environmental health (lead, mercury...)
- Healthy lifestyles (nutrition, physical activity, stress management, sleep...)

# Improve early identification

## Examples:

- MH screening at all ages
- Warning signs (child and family)
- Training of school / public health personnel
- Child care training / consultation
- Transition from EI program to schools

# Incorporate MH services / perspective into public health programs



# Educate public

## Examples:

- Parent education (anticipatory guidance, building resilience, early signs of distress)
- Public campaign addressing stigma



# Advocate for resources and system changes

## Examples:

- Fully implement insurance parity
- Subsidize child psychiatrists (e.g., consultation network)
- Incorporate MH care coordination into ECCS (Early Childhood Comprehensive Services) early childhood health plan

# Monitor impact of changes

- Participating MH providers
- Claims data / Medicaid & SCHIP
- Youth Risk Behavior Survey
- Persons receiving MH services by race / ethnicity
- Abuse / neglect rates; out-of-home placements
- Educational outcomes (drop-out, suspension, graduation rate)
- Juvenile crime rate
- Injuries
- Consumer / provider opinion

# AAP resources from the Task Force on Mental Health (2004-present)

- Improving Mental Health Services in Primary Care: Reducing Administrative and Financial Barriers to Access and Collaboration (joint white paper with AACAP), *Pediatrics*, April 2009
- The Future of Pediatrics: Mental Health Competencies for Pediatric Primary Care (policy statement), *Pediatrics*, July 2009

# AAP resources from the Task Force on Mental Health (continued)

- Strategies for System Change in Children's Mental Health: A Chapter Action Kit
- [www.aap.org/mentalhealth](http://www.aap.org/mentalhealth) (e.g. state-level initiatives through contracts supported by MCHB)
- Coming in spring...

# Contacts

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